

Phyllostachys aurea (Golden Bamboo, Fishpole Bamboo)

Poaceae (Grass Family)

Initial Introduction and Expansion in Range

There have been hundreds of bamboo species introduced into the United States from various countries. In North Carolina, most of the cultivated bamboo species are in the genus *Phyllostachys*, and the most commonly cultivated species that is naturalizing is *Phyllostachys aurea*.

Introduced from China in the late 1800s, *P. aurea* is found throughout the southeastern United States from Maryland, south to Florida, west to Louisiana and Arkansas, and northwest to Oregon. This plant is still widely promoted and sold as an ornamental and to be used for privacy fences. Although *P. aurea* rarely flowers, infestations can rapidly spread through rhizomes, often forming dense, monotypic thickets.

Description and Biology

- Although a member of the Grass Family, *P. aurea* is a woody, perennial, reed-like plant that can reach heights up to 30 feet.
- Golden to green stems (canes) are hollow with solid joints and measure between 1 and 6 inches in diameter.
- Lance-shaped leaves are arranged alternately along the stem in fan-like clusters.
- Rarely produces flowers and fruit.
- Can be confused with *Arundinaria gigantea* (giant cane), a native throughout the United States, but this plant usually only reaches a height of 6 to 8 feet.